

THE COMMUNICATOR

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CUNY Students Protest Tuition Hikes

By Beatriz Ramirez

On the 22nd of November, the CUNY Board of Trustees met to vote on the proposed tuition hike for CUNY students. Dozens of students from all of CUNY were there to oppose the decision on the cuts. Prior to the Board of Trustees meeting students ramped up and pre-energized for the meeting at a rally with chants and anti-Hike slogans.

At the Board of Trustees meeting, when it came time for the voting of the tuition, students once again protested by chanting loudly and disrupted the meeting for a long period of time. The students felt empowered, chanting their pleas for a better CUNY, reflecting those of the oppressed and every student fighting for a better opportunity to an education of quality.

Security guards forcibly escorted students who were merely chanting, out of the meeting room. Among them was BCC's SGA President, Dwight Peters. As the groups of students were being "kicked out" of the building, chanting continued, and the officers, out of frustration, resorted to physically assaulting the protesters. In his account, Mr. Peters said, "I sat on the hallway floor as a symbol of non-violence and continued chanting." Through his protest of non-violence and message of community improvement, eventually he and another student were arrested and detained. The authorities kept these students, who were chanting for themselves and everyone else in an isolated room for approximately 30-45 minutes. And upon being release they were issued court summons.

After being led out of the meeting, and eventually the building, students rallied outside and gave speeches. They spoke of the solidarity CUNY students have with students all over the world, fighting budget cuts, tuition hikes and fighting for free education.

Three days later, while Americans were celebrating Thanksgiving on the 25th of November, student protests broke out around the world. Tens of thousands of university students and protesters took to the streets of London to oppose government plans to triple university tuition fees. Across Great Britain other protests took place where more than 25,000 students are believed to have participated. In Italy, university students occupied the



Leaning Tower of Pisa and Rome's Coliseum to protest education cuts and reforms before parliament.

After the protestors were escorted from the November 22nd meeting, The Board of Trustees of The City University of New York approved a University-wide \$2.8 billion budget request to State and City officials, which includes an additional \$95.2 million for mandatory needs and \$63.1 million for programmatic needs over this year's adjusted levels.

Here is one last note from our Student Government President for important ways to get involved.

Greetings Students and Faculty of Bronx Community College:

My name is Dwight Peters, president of The Bronx Community College Student Government Association. As we all know the welfare of our education is constantly being jeopardized as it is typically always the first item placed on the 'chopping block' as we make our way through the muddy waters of this economic crisis. Yet, we are being placed in a position where we must take a stand, a stand of defiance and say "NO! WE WILL NOT ALLOW THIS ANY LONGER". We must take a stand against the current/and coming budget cuts and tuition hikes, and realize that the best person to advocate for us, is us.

Our tuition is, once again, being placed in a position to be raised. There is only so much that I, or the

Student Government Association, NYPIRG, The PSC Union, The Political Science Club and other entities on campus can do to advocate for students. Yet together, we can make a strong impact, an impact that can change the structure of CUNY for generations to come.

CUNY was a free institution for the working-class families and immigrant families of the City of New York from 1847 to 1975. Tuition is constantly/steadily being increased at such rates (5% here, 2% there) in the hopes that no one takes notice of it. But in total, Tuition has gone up 44% since 2003. How much longer are we going to stand by while they bail out companies and make us, the poor, the young, the workers, and the students of New York bail the government out?

On December 2nd, at 12pm, during BCC club hours, students organized in Meister Hall lobby to voice and discuss their concerns and possible modes of action. The unification between the students needs to continue to grow.

By the time the paper is distributed throughout the campus, December 2nd has come and gone. May we continue to educate ourselves, organize and act in a manner that will bring us a better college experience.

We challenge every student to be vocal, and to start demanding more for their dollar. Since we are paying more, we deserve more of a say in the operation of our school and CUNY as a whole.

I urge everyone to contact their state legislatures and voice their disgust over the rising cost of CUNY and our SUNY partners. Not only that, contact the members of the City Council's Committee on Higher Education to urge the creation of a resolution over this matter. The way these guys act is on pressure. If we don't put pressure on them, they'll do nothing for us.

Above all, stay informed, "those that be" are banking on us not knowing, not caring, and not doing anything.

Sincerely,
Dwight Peters

Getting Closer to What Is Really Important by Volunteering

By Jeffrey Guard

What is important in life? What do I really want to do with my life?

Traveling abroad and volunteering in a foreign country can open these questions up and force you to examine the answers. Being immersed in a different country, volunteering in a hospital that was working at its full capacity, observing sick patients having to share beds, dealing with no air conditioning in near-equatorial heat, with limited resources, and feeling somewhat powerless—I was constantly wrestling with these questions.

One day, I showed up to the female ward of the Base Hospital at 6:01 am for my shift and saw a crowd of people swarming around a bed with two nurses and the house officer, Dr. Amina. They were desperately trying to resuscitate a frail, elderly patient. The drama was palpable; my own heart was pounding so hard I thought it would rip through my shirt. The patient was lifted and rushed to the CCU. There the patient died.

In that moment, observing the patient die was profoundly sad and witnessing Dr. Amina tell the family who stood close by was heartbreaking. Watching a grown man breakdown and cry at the sight of his deceased mother is something I will never forget. There's very little that anyone can do in a situation like that to comfort the grief-stricken. But in that situation, as I clenched my jaw tight and fought to hold my own tears in, I asked the question: *Is this really what I want to do with my life?*

My mission in life is to improve communities by practicing medicine. I want to fulfill that mission by becoming a medical doctor. One of the objectives as a medical doctor I want to provide is high-quality medical treatment to low-access communities both in the Bronx, and the world.

Now, here I was in Sri Lanka-experiencing in real-time, the very thing I say I wanted to do with my life. *Is this really what I want?* The work was hard, hot and, in some ways sad, especially when there was nothing that could be done to help really sick patients. At the end of the day, the doctor in this situation rarely gets the credit they deserve. They usually end up exhausted, overworked

and severely underpaid, *but despite all of that*, I could not imagine myself doing anything else.

Volunteering provided me with real-life experience to confirm if pursuing this path was the right one. Each and everyday I kept asking this question and the answer every day, came back as "YES! This is exactly what I want to do."

I think I got a lot of attention from the doctors because they could sense my passion and genuine interest in wanting to learn medicine. Working directly with doctors, was another experience that confirmed I was on the right track. I really enjoyed working with doctors. I enjoyed the 'high octane' intelligence that comes with practicing medicine. I appreciate that what seem like simple questions have very complicated answers. I very much enjoyed discussing and learning about disease-states and medical treatment plans. I found myself not wanting the conversations to end, not wanting the learning experience to end, not wanting the clinical rotations to end.

Somewhere in the middle of this volunteer experience I began telling myself, "No matter what obstacle or challenge that is thrown in front of me, I will become a doctor."

I knew, despite, the difficult operating environment of the Base Hospital—that I was home and I was truly meant to be a doctor spending the rest of life doing this kind of work. The volunteer experience gave me this gift of deeper insight and greater perspective, and thankfully, it confirmed that I was on the right path in life.

Again, I never thought I would be given this level of profound insight from volunteering. I'm so grateful to have it, because I'm taking some very difficult courses right now and I routinely draw from my volunteer experience in Sri Lanka. In times of stress and challenge, I go to that undeniable feeling of knowing that I was meant to be a doctor, practicing medicine. Going to that place motivates me to study harder and achieve the necessary grades to eventually be accepted into medical school and



Male ward in hospital in Sri Lanka.

to become a doctor and fulfill my dream.

Volunteering gave me this gift and it helped me find my path in life, maybe it can do the same for you.

This is the third and last installment in a series of articles by Jeffrey Guard that have chronicled his volunteer abroad experience in Sri Lanka made possible by a BCC Michael Steuerman Legacy Fund Scholarship.

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Campus News

The Death of a Dream: A Review

By William Murray

On Thursday October 21, 2010 (the Month of Domestic Violence Awareness), Bronx Community College presented *The Death of a Dream*, a dramatic composition by Bronx resident, playwright, and social service program worker for Bronx-Lebanon Hospital, Nancy Genova.

The cast included Nikauray Acosta, Julissa Roman, and Caridad De La Luz (aka La Bruja). The play represented the hurt and destructiveness that victims of domestic violence and spousal abuse face. It showed women who were so mortified by the abuse they suffered, that they entered a state of refusal to believe that they were scapegoats for their partner/perpetrator's anger. The play ultimately depicted how three women from different personal histories become victims of different forms of violence at the hands of different men, and their coming to terms with the abuse. The play also portrayed the lives of men who grow up to repeat the cycles of domestic violence that they were reared with, showing the various patterns of behavior in emotionally, psychologically, and physically abusive relationships.

During the Q&A session, the panelists discussed different forms of violence, such as physical assault and sexual abuse, which can both often be deemed criminal. Panelists also conversed with BCC attendees on what efforts can be made by individuals in combination with outreach organizations for developing strategies to define domestic violence and spousal abuse to help remediate those conditions.



William Murray, SGA Senator, with the cast of *The Death of a Dream*: Nikauray Acosta, Julissa Roman, and Caridad De La Luz (aka La Bruja). Photo: Sharon Chin.

Be Alert!

With the end of the semester approaching, members of the campus community need to remember safety procedures on campus and to be alert to their surroundings. Increased enrollment has created a much busier campus and recent construction projects have restricted available space. We now have to watch out for ourselves and each other more than ever before.

Not too long ago, a young person was hit by a car and killed on University Ave. just outside the BCC campus. One factor that contributed to this tragic accident was the fact that the victim was paying too much attention to his or her cell phone and not enough to traffic, and this happens very frequently on campus as well. People stare at their cell phones or listen only to their ipods and are not aware of the car right behind them.

Since pedestrians share space with vehicles, we need to be extra careful when crossing campus streets. Use sidewalks whenever possible and look both ways before crossing. Drivers must also use caution and have patience when driving on our narrow, busy streets. Let's make sure that no accidents occur.

From the Professional Staff Congress

The Best of All Worlds

By Carmela Perez

Diverse countries united on Monday November 15th at the International and Phi Theta Kappa (PTK) Cultural Celebration in Colston Hall, lower level. Jamaica, Peru, the Dominican Republic, Ghana, Japan and Pakistan were represented by Phi Theta Kappa students at stations which were beautifully decorated and many cultural items were displayed: bangles, pieces of hair extensions specifically design for women from Pakistan, magazines, books, vestments, vases, stools, posters, picture frames, garments, brochures, domestic supplies and musical instruments. A PowerPoint presentation created by PTK members illustrated the technological aspect of these countries.

More than one hundred students and faculty members attended the ceremony, each honoring the motto "Together Uniting as One." The students gathered together to stamp their hands on a large sheet of paper that was placed against the wall, and different colors were used to represent different nations that came together as one.

The ceremony began with Dean Bernard J. Gantt, who served as Master of Ceremonies followed by Dr. Phyllis Proctor from CUNY International Students and Scholar Services, who represented international students from across students. Dr. Proctor mentioned the importance of international students in our community who leave their country and families for a better education as well as opportunity here in the states. Their struggle as foreigners in a new country does not impede them from pursuing their goal, which motivates them to seek success.

There were also various presentations by students from BCC: the Dance Workshop performed an original dance called "Viva BCC" with music by Gloria Estefan. Speech, Drama and Debate's Eric Suttin and Beatriz Ramirez recited dramatic poetry from Black Ice and Mambo T Major. Urban Unity DOUBLE UUUUU brought soul and excitement to the stage as they passionately performed their own anthem which expressed their love for music as well as for their school. Joel Cabrera, a member of PTK, took the stage and performed one of his own songs. International Students Club members Vernita Rolle, Alrick Rapha, Leanna Warrington and Alderson Magloire danced the "Quadrille," a traditional dance from the Commonwealth of Dominica. Lastly, the Dominican Club shared their wonderful culture through various PowerPoint presentations and a dance exhibition. Phi Theta Kappa raffled a beautiful blue Coach bag and brown Coach Wallet that helped raise funds.

Awards were given to Dr. Peter Barbatis, Ms. Martha Charles-Glenn, Ms. Wrenn Crowe, Ms. Janet Nelson, Ms. Audrey Rose-Glenn, Ms. Colleen Simpson, the Office of Student Life, the Budget Committee, Prof. Teresa L. McManus,



Ms. Martha Charles-Glenn (second from left), Office of International Student Services, and members of the International Club.

Mr. Clifford Marshall II, and Dean Bernard J Gantt in appreciation of their contributions to the International Students Club and international students in general.

As this successful and educational event came to end, many were able to understand and appreciate the struggles that foreigners face in a new country; students, faculty members and staff united the day of the 18th to celebrate the different cultures within Bronx Community College and become more aware of what is happening around other parts of the world.

Closing the International Students and Phi Theta Kappa Cultural event was Ms. Charles-Glenn from the Office of International Student Services, who thanked everyone for coming in celebration of a wonderful event. Vernita Rolle, President of the International Students Club said, "The International Students and Phi Theta Kappa Cultural event was quite a success. This event was designed to offer students from various countries the opportunity to display in performance and exhibition the culture and heritage of their homeland. We are pleased that this cultural extravaganza was able to give the college community a firsthand experience of International Students inimitable traditions. On behalf of the International Students Club, I would like to extend my deepest gratitude to everyone who participated in making this event a success.

Special thanks to Dean Bernard J. Gantt and the Office of Enrollment Management, Ms. Martha Charles-Glenn and the Office of International Student Services, Phi Theta Kappa, the Office of Student Life, the Student Government Association, Dr. Suzan Moss and the Dance Workshop, Professor Ellen Mareneck and the Speech Drama and Debate Team, the Dominican Club, Urban Unity, L-Revolution, our award recipients, Alrick Rapha, and, most of all, the members of the International Students Club. It was with diligence and unity that we were able to deliver such an event.

NYPIRG Announces REFUNDS

Students on this campus voted to support a NYPIRG chapter. Like other clubs and organizations on campus, NYPIRG is funded through the mandatory student activity fee. Unlike any other club or organization, NYPIRG offers a refund of the portion of the student activity fee earmarked for NYPIRG in case any student does not wish to contribute.

The New York Public Interest Research Group (NYPIRG) is New York State's largest student-directed non-partisan research and advocacy organization. Students involved with NYPIRG's 20 college campus chapters across New York State become educated and energized participants on campus and in their surrounding communities.

NYPIRG students learn event planning, problem solving, debate skills, research, and writing by organizing and engaging in meaningful issue based campaigns. NYPIRG provides an arena for students to actively engage in civics while learning how to make a difference.

To request a refund or for further information please contact:

Leticia Negron

Bronx Community College NYPIRG Chapter

Meister Hall Rm 214

718-289-5409

lnegron@nypirg.org

Refund Amount: Three dollars per student/per semester

Campus News

Learn How to Create Your Own Winning and Professional Online Brand in Three Simple Steps Part 2: Sourcing and Publishing Your Content Online

By Muhammad Jalloh

In this second part of our online personal branding series, we will cover how to source (come up with), create and publish content on your website. I am assuming that you have a basic knowledge of how to setup a personal website or blog online. If you do not think you have enough background information in this regard, please, read the first part of this series, “Establishing an Online Presence”, by visiting www.jalloh.com/tech.

Now, why should you take the time to post content on your website? Why should you put in your best efforts into publishing the best information that you can? Before we move onto the technicalities of doing so, let us look at some of the reasons you should make sure you have the best content you can put together. These include:

Portfolio Development: Irrespective of your current (past or intended future) professional calling or title (professor, administrator, student, entrepreneur, employee, civil servant, etc), you most likely have a storehouse of information related to your field of expertise or area of focus that you can publish and share with the world. Every man and woman is a powerhouse of quality information if only they can harness it. And, you are not an exception.

A Unique Brand: When you regularly publish quality content online, you establish yourself as an authority in your field of expertise or interest. If you frequent the web, you are probably familiar with people who made a name for themselves on the Internet and attained celebrity status by just publishing online. This also sets you apart from the crowd as you would have proven yourself to possess both a sufficient working knowledge (or extreme interest) in your area as well as the ability to effectively communicate these to a wider audience. If you have been paying close attention, you would have noticed that online bloggers are increasingly being invited to appear as guest (or sometimes even as regular) commentators on talk shows and TV programs to share their insights on politics, the economy, education, environmentalism, etc.

Career Advancement: If you are in search of a (perhaps better) employment opportunity, then go ahead and start a blog or website and share great information. This has landed people jobs at some of the nation’s top media companies. If you are a professional, you can also get more qualified business prospects by publishing online. You are also more likely to land consulting gigs when you publish and establish that you are an authority in your field than if you do not.

Academic Prospects: As a student, it makes a big difference when you publish. You are more likely to qualify for scholarships, grants and other forms of financial support since you can readily point to or mention your online publications when you speak to or apply to prospective scholarship or grant opportunities. This sets you apart from those who have nothing to present more than just a resume and a personal statement. You have already made a statement online about your interests, experience and/or expertise.

There are many other reasons to publish online, depending on your field of endeavor, interest or expertise, but the aforementioned are just a few of the most evident. Now that you know why you should publish online, let’s get to how to go about it quickly, easily and systematically. There are three elements to it:

1. **Sourcing or Creating the Content:** This component deals with how and where to get the content you will be publishing on your website.
2. **Content Organization:** This deals with how best to sort your content into different and sensible categories so that every piece is filed in the right place and could be found easily by your readers or website visitors.
3. **Publishing Your Content:** This is where you actually (and finally) post your content online. This is the final stage in the content publishing system.

But before we move on, you should know that the content you publish online can be in any one or a combination of a number of formats. These are:

- ☐ **Text:** This is what the bulk of information online is published in. This is the usual text that you see on websites and blogs. This can also take the form of PDF documents that you can post online.
- ☐ **Audio:** You can also upload and publish audio files or podcasts on your websites. If you are more of a speaker than a writer, this route may be a better option for you than writing, especially if you are not particularly comfortable with the art of the written word.
- ☐ **Video:** Whether you shot the video using your web cam, phone or had a professional videographer’s help, you can post them on your website or blog and share with the world (or just your website users.)

You can also post a combination of any of the above content formats, if and when necessary. For example-if you are a poet-you can post the text of your poem online as well as a video of you reciting it and/or the audio files of the recital. It is all possible with the Internet. Now, let’s get back to the three elements or stages of publishing your content online:

Sourcing and/or Creating Your Content

This is the first stage. Here, you have one of two means of getting content:

- ☐ Source for content from already available resources.
- ☐ Create fresh (new) content to post on your website or blog.

Five Simple Ways to Generate Your Own Original Content

To come up with your own original content, all you have to do is look at the different dimensions or aspects of your personality and the circumstances around you and you will see that you have a never-ending pool of content anytime you want it. These dimensions are:

1. **Personal Passions:** Whatever personal interests you have, if you are sufficiently interested or grounded in it, you can create great content around it. Here are some ideas:
 - ☐ **Science:** Do you enjoy hacking (professional security hacking, not to be confused with malicious cyber crime), then blog about it; it may land you a Computer Security job or consultancy when you least expect it. Are you a nerdy programmer? Build some cool software and blog about them. Do you love or hate the current state of the world of engineering? Make a list of all that’s wrong with it and each one, one at a time, on your website.
 - ☐ **Arts:** Do you love drawing, sketching cartoons, penciling funny caricatures of your friends or politicians, or are you a skilled Photoshop pro? Scan and post samples of your work on your blog or brand them with your name and website address and allow college newspapers and other website owners and bloggers to publish them for free. You may soon start getting gigs for some regular comic stripes or graphic design work.

Are you a skilled photographer or an avid videographer? Then post samples of your work on Flickr, YouTube and your own site and develop a strong following and watch what happens next. (Hint: People with jingling pockets may come calling with regular paid work.)

 - ☐ **Literature:** Are you a creative writer, a gifted wordsmith, an artful or skilled storyteller, or a passionate spoken word artist? Go ahead and publish your work on your website. The publishers may soon be knocking on your door with some juicy deals for you.
 - ☐ **Activism:** Are you always talking about how the latest police brutality case has spurred racial hatred or how the oil companies are making life unbearable for the average people? Do you worry and always complain about the deplorable state of education in minority communities? Or do you always grunt and grumble whenever the issue of immigration or global warming is brought up in the media or by those around you? Congratulations! You may have the spirit of an activist! Now, go on and share your thoughts and concerns online. You will soon find out that you are not alone and will create a large and loyal following of likeminded and concerned people.
 - ☐ **Volunteerism:** Are you always taking part in one walk-a-thon or the other? Do you find yourself spending time volunteering at your local soup kitchen instead of cooking your own turkey during Thanksgiving? You should share your experiences and passions with others by maintaining a blog. You will soon develop an army of likeminded and highly motivated volunteers. Society will be better off because of your efforts to publish and recruit in one breath.
 - ☐ **Sports:** Many of us are avid sportsmen and women (or at least passionate fans). Whether it is football, soccer, baseball, basketball, scuba driving or even the extreme sports, you will always have enough going on that you can create and publish regular and rich content for your website and the avid visitors who will be storming it to read, listen to or watch every new thing you post on it. You can cover the wins, losses, athlete updates, games, etc. in that field. You may never know when a reporter will call you up to appear on their show as a commentator to discuss the latest beating that “Team X” (a fictional team) got at the hands of their arch rivals!

Campus News

2. **Hobbies:** Whatever your hobbies are, you can create a blog or website around them and post regular content dealing with them. It does not matter whether you are in love with gardening, fishing, traveling, learning new languages, developing new recipes or making movies. Whatever your hobby, you can create content around it. Discuss related news, industry trends, local associations, upcoming conferences or seminars or hard-to-find deals that you come across.
3. **Professional Experience:** Are you currently working (used to work or hope to work) in a particular field that you are passionate about? Discuss best practices, your likes and dislikes about the status quo or workings of the industry and ways to improve them. If you have observed it closely, then you have “insider knowledge” (not to be confused with proprietary company information) that you can share with others.
4. **Academic Pursuits:** If you are a student (and are hopefully passionate about what you study), then go ahead, do research and publish your findings on your website. Or, discuss the state of your area of interest (the good, the bad and the ugly sides of it and possible ways of improving them) and post these on your website. If you are a professor, you have most likely published materials in your field, presented at conferences or professional events or collaborated on academic works. Whatever it is, publish them on your own website too and go a step further by exploring and publishing more (detailed) areas of your expertise.
5. **Personal Background:** Do you consider yourself an evangelist for your beliefs? Are you concerned about the current state of your ethnic or racial group? Do you find yourself worrying about the standard of living of people of your background or community? Do you come from a family of geeks and technocrats? Whatever your background, it is interesting enough that you can find a lot of information that you can publish and share with others on a regular basis. Discuss new legislation that would affect you, trends that are changing the tide (positively or negatively) or your insights into the best ways to solve the recurring problems.

From the foregoing, you would have realized by now that whoever you are and whatever you are involved in or want to be involved in or associated with, you can create valuable and original content around it.

Organizing Your Content

Once you have figured out and made a list of all the possible ways of sourcing and creating content for your blog or website, the next thing you should do is to:

Categorize: Organize your content into different categories for easy filing and management. For example, if you are a poet, you may want to organize your poems into themes. So, you could have a “social” category (for your poems about family, relationships, etc.), a “politics” category (for those poems about how bad your elected reps are running and ruining the government), a “personal” category for those poems that has to deal with your daily musings and experiences, and so on. Whatever your area, you can organize your content into categories to make it easier for you to collect your thoughts together and for your readers, visitors and loyal fans to find your content.

Use Tagging: Most modern website development and blogging software (like Wordpress, Joomla, and others) give you the ability to ‘tag’ your content. If you have used the Photos feature on Facebook or Flickr, you have already been exposed to the idea of tagging. For your content, you can also tag every article, video or audio/podcast file that, for instance, has to do with ‘web programming’ (if your focus is on computer technology). The Wordpress blogging system is especially great for this.

Cross-Linking: Once you have sufficient articles, videos or podcasts posted on your website, you can cross-link them to make it easier to find or continue reading on a certain topic. For instance, if your interest is on creating new recipes, you can cross-link the part 1 of “How to Cook Delicious African Fufu” with the Part 2 and 3, and so on. You can cross-link content you post on different websites online so that it becomes very easy for your readers to stay updated on what, when and where you publish online.

Publishing and Managing Your Content Online

This is the third stage in your path to having your content on the Internet. There are a number of ways that you can make your videos, audio (or podcasts) and articles available online, depending on your area of focus or your chosen and target audience.

Depending on the format of your content and your target audience and their internet content consumption habits (where they go to watch videos, read what other people write about or hang out, etc), you can post your content on a number of platforms and or cross-post them on any number of places online. These include:

- **Video Sharing Websites:** If you have videos that you want to post online, then you may want to think about creating an account on YouTube, Viddler and other video sharing websites and uploading your content on them. You can then easily embed these videos (link to them) on and from your website. This way, you won’t have to worry about whether you end up having too much website traffic and having to deal with a monstrous webhosting bill for the bandwidth that your videos will be consuming from all the thousands of views.
- **Social Media Sites:** If you have an account on Facebook, LinkedIn, Squidoo or other social media websites, you can post your content on them or post links to your website content on them. For example, you can use the “Notes” feature on Facebook to pull the content from your website or blog and have them automatically posted on your Facebook Notes whenever you publish new content on your website or blog.
- **Your Website or Blog:** When you create your own website or blog (see www.jalloh.com/tech for more info on how to do so), you can post whatever format of content you want (videos, pictures, articles, audio, etc) on your website. Since your site is your own personal online storehouse of information, you can publish any content on it. Want to upload that video of you giving a speech at your club’s annual convention? Upload it to your website for the whole world to see. Have you been wanting to share your feelings and experiences about that community service program that you participated in? Just write an article on it or record a video or audio of you talking about it and publish it on your website.

Now that you know how to source or create content, how to organize them for simplicity, ease of navigation and access, and the different ways you can publish your content online, let us take a look at what I call “The Five Golden Rules of Online Publishing.” There are certain principles of “common sense” (as uncommon as common sense may be) that you should have at the back of your mind whenever you decide you want or need to publish any type or format of content online, whether on your own website or others.

The Five Golden Rules of Online Publishing

1. Thou Cannot Retract What Thou Publish: If you don’t want your mother, significant other, employer or business partner to know about it, then think twice about publishing it online. Because once it’s online, it’s not going anywhere. In addition to the ease of sharing published online content, there are sites that specialize in archiving the content available on all sites online (and you can be rest assured that “no website is left behind”.) So, think twice. You may perish by publishing the wrong way or content!

2. Thou Shalt Treat Thy Online Personality Like a Delicate Brand: Just as what you say, wear and look like comprises your offline personality, what you publish online is what your online personal brand is composed of. So, be careful about what you post online as your online personality WILL be judged by it.

3. If Celebrity is Gold, Privacy is Golden: Sometimes you may be tempted to post details of your personal, professional and love life online. Please, DON’T! Do you feel like updating your Facebook status to say that you just left home or are leaving tomorrow for vacation and won’t be returning until next week? Don’t! You may come back home to an empty house or even expose your family members to your online “friends” who may be sexual predators, burglars, and other types of criminals or misfits.

4. Er, Keep Your Qualms to Yourself: Did you just break up with your significant other? Did you just have a heated argument with a co-worker or think you are taking too much heat from your “control freak” of a boss? Please, don’t whine about it online; instead try to settle it with them. Once you blog about it, post those embarrassing pictures of them or update your Facebook wall to reflect it, it is now public information and could have dire consequences. So, **think thrice** about sharing your personal troubles or rants online.

5. Don’t be a Stray Webbie: Or, in other words, “no common sense lands you in a gutter of nonsense.” Are you so obsessed with the web that you publish every single detail and waking moment of your life online? Do you share where you eat, your full date of birth, where you go and stay and your most intimate likes and dislikes with your crowd of Facebook “friends” (aka stalkers) or Twitter followers? Then, you are probably “virtually naked” and have left total strangers and stalkers with a very clear and working map of your whole life. So, share and publish with care. In a virtual world, the last thing you want is to be vulnerable. Remember: DON’T be caught virtually naked!

That may be all you need to know to learn how to source, create and publish your own content online to develop your online personal brand. In the next part of the “Online Personal Branding” series, we will take a look at how you can develop a large and responsive following of people who will read and share your content and drive even more people to your website or blog. Till then, please, go online and start building your website or blog and publishing content on it. Thank you for reading! ☺

If you have questions, comments or suggestions (on what you may want to see covered in the next issue, etc.) or to get a list of resources that you may need to use, please, visit www.jalloh.com/tech . I am counting on your feedback. For all personal questions, please, send them to tech@jalloh.com . Now, go and start publishing online and building your online brand! Hasta La Vista!

Poetry Corner

Artist of the Month: Nirvana
By Beatriz Ramirez

Nirvana is a student leader on Campus and belongs to several clubs and organizations: Phi Theta Kappa international honor society, CUNY Black Male Initiative, and CUNY Ambassadors Program, to name a few. She is the Winner of BCC Fall 2010 Poet’s Lounge.



In Nirvana’s own words about what inspires her to write and the affect its had on her life: “Poetry and performing has brought a joy, solace and inner peace to the chaos that is life. It’s there for me when no one else is, when I need an outlet, or spiritual nourishment, and, lastly, it shows the world who I REALLY am.”

The Pills

Alone in the dark is where I like to be
Trying to grasp what’s left of my sanity
So I filled my prescription at the local pharmacy

Pills

Never did much for me but make me feel ill and
Excluded from society
But I hoped these pills would set me free
Labeled as weak because sometimes I can’t stand on my
Own two feet and
I see a shrink twice a week
I’m tired of people misjudging me
Appearances state I have it all mapped out perfectly but secretly
I’m falling apart and it’s getting harder to cover the parts
With the marks
Trying to figure out ways to keep cutting inconspicuously
Yet hoping someone would save me from me
Is anybody out there???

Anybody?

Because right now im feeling pretty fucking alone!
You know hearts turn to stone when they don’t
Have a place to call home

All I wanna do is hide
I’m ready to get off this ride
Have you ever felt this way inside?
Like you wanted to die
Pain so intense
That you couldn’t even cry?
I wanna be free from all this agony
So ending my life seems like the only option for me!

Because...

The pills didn’t set me free...
They see so much talent in me but
Maybe I’m blind because
I just don’t see
all I know is this tunnel is closing in on me

But the pills wont set me free...

My heart is filled with rage
But everyone’s encouraging me to be optimistic and
turn the page
But it’s hard to maintain when your hourly wage
Isn’t enough to sustain equilibrium in your brain
I don’t wanna play this game.
Because it’s owned by those who have acquired fame
While the lower class bust their ass for minimal gains
I’m ready to take off these chains

Because...

The pills didn’t work for me
Unfortunately
Unfortunately

The pills didn’t comfort me
Unfortunately
Unfortunately

The pills didn’t work for me
And
the pills will never work for me

So...

I loaded the clip...
Listened for the click...
Pressed the barrel to my lips..

and that.....

My Lifetime
By Adedamola Agboola

Before I was born I knew nothing
I was only a spirit
Asking for a body to dwell
When I was born
I was given life

Then,
Pride found me
I lost my friends
I lost hope

When I had life
I was given a family
I felt like I belonged
Then came a purpose

When I had given up,
Then I found a wife,
When I found a wife,
I found beauty, intimacy and love

Armed with a purpose,
I was taken care of
When I was being taken care of,
Then I began to grow,

With love
I neglected my family,
Then I lost them
Things began to change

When I was growing up
I had to get education,
When I was being educated,
I made friends,

I lost my job
When I lost my job
I lost my wife
Then peace, happiness and joy

When I had friends,
I found belonging,
Then happiness,

After losing everything
I lost my mind
Without hope of getting help
I took my life

When I graduated,
I found a career,
Then a job,
When I found a job,
I gained wealth,
When I became wealthy,
I was successful

www.jay-chronicles.blogspot.com

Rainy Days
By Evalin Proum

Your fantastic news
Has nothing to do with me.
Things we used to talk about
Our dreams, our fears, hopes, regrets
...we used to be so close.
Now, your life is changing
In ways I cannot comprehend.
Well, there is one thing I do know:
I am no longer a part of it.
My decision. My choice.
Strong empowered person me.
I always do the choosing.
But what is it about this supposed power
That leaves me feeling the opposite of strong?
My face, still fleshy and marked by youth
But my thoughts...
When things go awry, I stop, ask myself:
What did I contribute? How much of this is mine?
But what is the point in asking
If I never listen to the answer?
Rainy days make me think too much.
Time alone lets me think too much.
I ache for what I used to have
And long for what is coming.
Get here faster, I say.
Please,
Faster.

Outside the Quad

AN INVITATION TO

Creating a Culture of Peace Nonviolence Training for Personal and Social Change

For students, faculty and staff

**When: December 28, 29 and 30
Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday
(8:30 AM to 6:00 PM each day)**

-or-

**January 15, 16 and 17
Saturday, Sunday, Monday
(8:30 AM to 6:00 PM each day)**

Note: Monday is Martin Luther King Day

Where:

Language Hall Faculty and Staff Lounge

See Professor David Blot
(Colston 639, x5688)

for registration forms and more information.

Exploring Career Opportunities with SUNY Maritime College

By Kenneth Brown



In the month of October, while so many of us delve into the world of searching and applying for colleges after Bronx Community College, we look toward the CUNY system.

However, an extraordinary school to consider and hidden right under our noses sits on a base south of us in Throgs neck in the Bronx. On the 28th of October I had the amazing opportunity to visit the camps of SUNY Maritime College with my fellow Alpha Beta Gamma brothers and the Business Club of Bronx Community College. I'd like to share my experience at this campus and offer you, fellow BCC students, information about a college I think many of you would benefit from, would

be interested in applying for (if you only knew), and should consider.

The two organizations from BCC were given a tour of this nostalgic campus. We learned about its history, the kind of resources it provides its students, and the significance of Maritime culture. We boarded the college's colossal sized, 565-foot, training ship, the Empire State VI where various navigational devices were explained to us. We were invited to their Mess-Hall for lunch, and spoke to enthusiastic Regiments (resident students) and Civics (off campus students), who shared their exciting stories of life on campus and of voyages since the school offers students to gain hands on experience and training by traveling to countries around the world which compliments classroom learning and gives students exposure to the world.

Maritime College was the first maritime school in the country, founded in 1874, and there are now six. The University prepares its students for careers in the maritime industry, the government, the military, and private industries.

SUNY Maritime College is located on the Fort Schuyler peninsula, surrounded by an amazing waterfront scene, sitting right below the Throgs Neck Bridge. On the peninsula of Fort Schuyler, the Stephen B. Luce Library, the Maritime Industry Museum, and the Center for Simulation and Marine Operation, including a bridge simulator electronics, navigation, and the radar simulator are all located. The campus has state-of-the-art laboratories and classrooms, and recreational facilities with 20 varsity athletic teams.

Maritime College offers undergraduate and graduate degrees in different areas of maritime, like engineering, environmental science, and, what interests us most, the business administration, ship management, and international transportation areas.

There's no doubt that the maritime business is one of the biggest facets of the business world. Ship and products make up our trade and commerce, so business students of BCC should especially explore their options in Maritime.

The Alpha Beta Gamma and Business Club truly enjoyed ourselves and would recommend this educational tour of SUNY Maritime to anyone interested in career options.

Our club would like to extend our gratitude to all the cadets that took their time to show us around their campus, Professor Perkins who took the time to drive us to and from the Maritime campus, Thomas D'Arrigo who made the trip possible by negotiating our visit with Maritime's facilitators and all of the club members who attended which are included in the noted picture.

The facility advisors for these clubs are Professors Elsworth Brown, Clarence Perkins and Howard Irby. The current president of Alpha Beta Gamma is Kenneth Brown. And the current president of the Business Club is George Delgado. And a special thanks to Beatriz Ramirez for helping me place my thoughts on paper.

BEGIN YOUR JOURNEY TO SUCCESS... EMERGING AS A LEADER AT BCC!

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PROGRAM CRITERIA

- First Year Student (first or second semester student)
- GPA 2.5 and above (if you are a second semester student)
- Must be willing to commit to participate in ALL program activities for the semester

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http://www.surveymonkey.com/s/ELP_2010

APPLICATION DEADLINE: October 15, 2010

For more information, Audrey Rose-Glenn, Coordinator, New Student Leadership Programs/Emerging Leaders Program Office of Student Life, Meister Hall, Room 202
Tel: 718-289-5914

Audrey.rose-glenn@bcc.cuny.edu
<http://www.facebook.com/BCCStudentLife>

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Outside the Quad

Writing Center Team Reaffirms Commitment to Their Mission at Recent Conference

Introduction by Professor Janet Robertson

With the bright lights of Time Square glinting off the wet pavement and the cold darkness above us and around us, Noman Jalal snapped the picture of the group, surrounded by our luggage, faces radiant with expectation and anticipation. It was November 5, 2010, 6:30 am and still dark outside. Twelve Bronx Community College tutors had gathered at the Port Authority bus terminal in Manhattan to take the bus to Baltimore, Maryland, to attend the biannual Joint Conference of The International Writing Centers Association and the National Conference of the Peer Tutors of Writing. Five more tutors would join us later.

The title of this year's conference was *Safe Harbors or Open Seas, Navigating Currents in Writing Center Work*, referring to the notion of Writing Centers as places where student writers can find a safe harbor and then continue on their journeys, having been replenished. Our tutors were going to connect with the world of Writing Centers, the peer tutors and professionals and to recognize their place in the International Writing Centers Association.

The International Writing Centers Association, founded in 1982 came out of an assembly at the NCTE. It was established as an organization to globally support Writing Center philosophy and pedagogy, the basis of which is to work collaboratively one on one and address all students' writing at all levels. Out of the International Writing Centers Association are Regional Writing Centers Associations - such as the Northeast Writing Centers Association and Mid-Atlantic Writing Centers Association. The website <http://writingcenters.org> contains links to all Writing Center work and projects, including news about conferences, research projects, job postings, the NCPTW and links to the online newsletter and other online publications, such as *The Writing Center Journal*.

The National Conference of the Peer Tutors of Writing (NCPTW) is a national organization which helps and supports peer tutors and offers a place for them to share their strategies, problems and successes. Its website, a link on the IWCA website contains, among many others, a link to the peer online journals, *The Dangling Modifier* and *Peer Centered*, which give tutors opportunities to blog, discuss any current, pertinent observations, ideas and share their own writing, from poetry to essays.

Evening Coordinator, Kenisha Thomas, and I are both members of the IWCA, and now the tutors at our Writing Center have had the opportunity to experience the power and significance of the National Conference on the Peer Tutors of Writing.

This adventure to Baltimore, generously funded by Senior Vice President George Sanchez and the Office of Academic Affairs, Auxiliary Enterprises, and The Office of Student Life - to all of whom we are enormously grateful - was an adventure from which the tutors returned filled with inspiration, new ideas, experiences and a realization that they are part of a national community of peer tutors. Indeed, in the grand and elegant rooms of the Inner Harbor Sheraton Hotel and amidst the vibrant energy of the 900 participants, many of whom had flown in from distant parts of the country, it would have been hard not to find inspiration. Even more, it would have been truly surprising if the group of enthusiastic, dedicated and committed BCC tutors had not found inspiration. They were looking for it. I would even say they brought it with them. They jumped into discussions at sessions, asked questions, offered ideas, and shared experiences. They were brilliant.

There were directors and their peer tutors from Writing Centers all over the country, some presenting, some not- but none could boast seventeen attendees. The event was generously hosted by The Mid-Atlantic Writing Center Association. When I told the Coordinator that I was registering seventeen members of my staff, he was astonished. His astonishment continued when I told him that our college was supporting us. They were so impressed that, on more than one occasion, I was introduced by Writing Center colleagues as the director from Bronx Community College who brought seventeen tutors.

Our BCC tutors mingled with the stars – rhetoricians, writers and professors whose names are on all the books we read at our Writing Center, or whose ideas are respected throughout the field. They became connected to what Miguel Gil refers to as the family of peer tutors and Writing Center professionals, which is an expansive, yet closely knit family, joined by a common passion for ideas of what Writing Centers are, what they are meant to



BCC Writing Center Staff

do and the importance of peer tutoring.

One of the subjects of a poster session at this year's conference was *The Peer Writing Tutor Alumni Research Project*, conducted by Professors Paula Gillespie of the Florida International University; Harvey Kail of the University of Maine; and Brad Hughes, the University of Madison, Wisconsin. The results of their research are profound and significant. Former Peer Writing Tutors were surveyed and asked to list the most significant, meaningful skills or values they developed as Writing Center tutors and if those skills and values acquired were factors influencing their careers and lives today. The answers they received (found in the full report on the IWCA website) range from the literal influence in some cases of current job choice as journalists or teachers of writing, to influence on character and personality. Most claimed that peer-tutoring had given them self-confidence, patience, compassion and the ability to communicate, listen, and process information. Reading through this project and its results reaffirms the beliefs that I have developed watching those dedicated to peer tutoring here at Bronx Community College. I have often heard the tutors comment on how rewarding the work is, and I believe that it is an eye-opening, life-changing experience for the tutors to work one on one with peers, helping them, knowing that they are giving their tutees confidence in their ideas and their abilities as writers. I have heard students who have come for tutoring in the The Writing Center say that they never used to think they had good ideas until they came to share their writing with the tutors.

I introduced myself to Paula Gillespie, who besides being the co-author of the *Peer Writing Tutor Alumni Research Project*, is a former president of IWCA, former professor at Marquette University, co-author of *The Alyn and Bacon Guide to Peer Tutoring*, (among dozens of other professional, scholarly publications) and current professor at the Florida International University. She responded to me, "Oh, yes, I have met some of your tutors. I invited them to come down for next year's conference and present." A group of them is already making plans for research and presenting at next year's NCPTW conference in Florida.

The following articles, written in response to their experience in Baltimore, reflect the conscientious and professional perspective that the BCC Writing Center peer tutors have towards their work:

Shazia Alam: "Jaano wake up...its 5 o'clock!" These words woke me up. Though I hate waking up early in the morning, I had no choice. I was nagging the whole time until we (Noman and I) reached the famous Port of Authority. Then I realized that I had a conference to attend for which Jan worked so hard. Thank the Lord everyone was there on time and we sat on the bus around 7 a.m. Jim Rohn's quote, "Learning is the beginning of wealth. Learning is the beginning of health. Learning is the beginning of spirituality. Searching and learning is where the miracle process all begins," finally helped me to be

fully charged, and I didn't stop talking for once with my fellow tutor Betty.

"Time and tide waits for none." It's so true. I didn't realize we safely reached our destination Baltimore. Though it was three and half hours that we all were sitting down, the minute the fresh breeze touched our faces, all of the BCC Writing Center's tutors were so hungry to conquer the knowledge, which was waiting for us in the Sheraton Hotel.

The chaotic part was going to the hotel and getting freshened up. It was 12:30 when we marched in the lunch room. The whole place was packed by ants; I mean to say peer tutors. Indeed it was a paradise for the Writing Center tutors.

We all enjoyed the yummy food by listening to the speaker, Allen Brizee. Later on we divided into smaller groups and went from one seminar to another in order to absorb the information related to tutoring. As Joseph Joubert said, "To teach is to learn twice," and this conference helped me to realize that the tutors at BCC are a lot better than a lot of others out there. Basically we went through a process consisting of a lot of readings, observing, experimenting and discussing.

Bronx Community College has a lot of ESL students and my main focus was to attend all the seminars related to that. The session "Rough Seas and Safe Harbor" was about the transition and training a tutor needs in order to meet the needs of second language writers, presented by the Bloomsburg University's tutors and director. They started the session stating most common errors, ESL writers have, but then they said tutors are not supposed to help students on grammar. After listening to a few other remarks, I couldn't hold my patience any more. I started asking questions about their duties and what they do after a session. Eventually, I ended up giving a lecture about the 12 steps of tutoring cycle, about the book *Keys for Writer* and also about our filing system, in which a tutor writes about the session and also about the pattern of errors, so in the next session it's easier for another tutor to focus. In the end we exchanged our email address with each other, so we can share our experience and strategies. Networking is really important. I think the purpose of the conference was to exchange our experiences with each other so that all tutors have the same understanding of what tutoring is rather than being editors.

As technology improves day by day, a lot of colleges have their own Writing Center website for students and faculty members. I strongly believe that we should get one too because this will act as a platform where students can access a variety of writing tips and practices.

At the poster presentation, there was a presentation which was very interesting for me: *UHCL Writing Center: Virtual tutor Susie Queue*. Basically if anyone has any question regarding to writing just go online (face book or at the college website), ask Susie and she will right away answer the student's concern. If anyone is having writer's block before writing a research paper... Don't worry Susie queue will be there to help you, starting from brainstorming, then detailed prewriting, via live chat.

Outside the Quad

I know by now you must be thinking it's impossible, but Susie Queue is generally representing all of us (tutors). A lot of times students come and wait for a tutor just to ask a few basic questions. After waiting for 45 minutes sometimes they leave because all the tutors were busy. As Hannah Arendt said, "For excellence, the presence of others is always required," and I think via Susie we can help every writer to start writing.

Personally, I think this is a great idea and a college with diverse cultures should introduce this kind of facility, where anyone can listen to tutors and directors- both new and experienced-as they talk about how they form connections with writers in face-to-face and on-line conferences, with fellow tutors as they work together to theorize their work, and with colleagues who direct other campus facilities.

Overall, it was a great experience for me. Thanks to Jan and all the contributors for making this trip possible. We all should go to this kind of conference once a while because they are packed with tons of strategies.

Miguel Gil: From the Safe Harbors of Bronx Community College of the "Boogie Down" to the Charming town of Baltimore, we went on November 5th. From dawn, I traveled with my tutorial kin, guided to a meeting with others to converge and reflect with each other on our pact to affirm our faith and vigor, to have students embrace the writing process and to be open to authorship.

Like so many Writing Centers, we met to learn and to be inspired by speakers, from scholar to scholar, by each other. We met as sisters and brothers to support each other in a place that was the Baltimore City Center Hotel, to many maybe just another Writing Center conference, but for the short two day stay, this place became a sort of a homecoming, however far we came. Like ships setting off to open seas for maybe different trajectories of meaning, but here to me found safe harbors, a hearth for the time for centers of writing to sound off our creed of collaboration in workshops wherever place they may lead.

So I was led to workshops enjoying my time, so much to learn, so little time.

So I was led to one that touched on the how Writing Centers can be places that free students towards becoming true authors. But all the same, how they may be places that alienate and affirm the normality of the academy, the delusion that we are meant "to fix" students to fit if we are not careful.

So, I was led to another that helped me see that as writing tutors, we must consistently remind ourselves that the writing process must respect the contradiction of trying to realize the end result but also embracing the value of being lost for the words to answer a topic. And how if writing is going to lead students to some place of meaning, getting lost may be a way of finding innovative ways of creating new ways of understanding themselves and the final product, whatever the assignment.

There was so much that I gained from my family of tutors in this temporal home, this strange, charming town, both direct and subtle. Yet, if anything really impressed me in this sea of fertile knowledge, it was the words of one keynote speaker at the end of my stay on Saturday, Dr. Andrea A. Lunsford, her words of meaning for all at the dinner hall, words talking about the political role of Writing Centers in the academy and their relation to the changes in the 2010 midterm elections, words that talked about changes in new technology through the Internet and how they would have a negative impact unless we as writing centers engage the winds of change and set sail to new vistas of collaboration. I agree with her, and her words summed up essentially what I still hold dear of those two days of creative discourse in the pleasant time in Baltimore.

Anjali Jaiman: Going to the International Writing Center Conference in Baltimore with the staff of the Bronx Community College Writing Center was an experience that pushed me out of the comfortable safety of our own writing center into the rougher waters of debates around the ideologies, knowledge and methods of writing centers. The conference affirmed the importance of writing centers on college campuses across the United States, not just in wealthy private institutions. Such institutions are designed both to help writing-students and to support writer-students; in other words, writing centers should function as communities of writers, in which tutors and students build relationships with each other *as writers*. We work together on individual assignments, but we also serve as a place where the most amazing and creative conversations produce new knowledge about politics, health, criminal justice, literature and of course how to be a writer. As students and tutors at Bronx, we must push

passed the idea of writing centers as "skill building" institutions, and see them as places where ideas come to fruition, through writing and through conversation.

What I value even more than the individual workshops were the insights and knowledge that we built among ourselves, as BCC writing tutors, as we responded to the lessons of the various workshops we attended. As BCC staff I think that we were pushed to think more deeply about the fine balance we as students and tutors must strike between gaining the skills we need to succeed and staying true to our own creative impulses, experiences and responsibilities. We were forced to think about how "skills"--grammar and organization are tightly intertwined with the "higher order concerns" of content and creativity. Unlike many other private institutions, as tutors at Bronx Community College, we must recognize that passing the class and passing the tests are not just "technicalities," but are actually pressing concerns for our students. As Lisa Delpit argues in "Skills and Other Dilemmas of a Progressive Black Educator" that if students of color and students from low income communities are to pass the tests and classes that will allow them to succeed, writing programs must encourage skill building in the context of creative and critical thinking. As BCC writers and tutors we must see that maybe "skills" and "content" are not as separable as many educators want them to be.

Margaret Olivencia: What was the BCC Writing Tutors' purpose in attending the 2010 IWCA/NCPTW conference in Baltimore, Maryland? Was it to go away for a day or two to a well-decorated hotel room to nestle in the clean white sheets in a queen-sized comfy bed overnight? Was it to venture out to the Inner Harbor, taking in the sights and sounds of a star-lit night in the crisp, cool air, while looking forward to experiencing one of the popular seafood restaurants for a savory dish that would satisfy one's palette? Let us not forget that the conference provided well-served satiating five-course meals (dessert included), adding to, for some, unwelcomed extra calories, but providing respite from cooking. The camaraderie, the picture-taking, the fun and laughter- these are all to be enjoyed; but the sole purpose of the tutors was to come back refocused, refreshed, reenergized- better informed, better enabled and inspired to serve the BCC student community.

Hence, well-managed time spent in the diverse workshops became crucial to me. Too much information intake could cause a memory circuit crash. I found myself teetering to that point.

I became discriminate with my sessions, stealthily leaving some that I deemed irrelevant to the needs of my back-home BCC students. Gladly I noted that one session touted the writing Socratic method the BCC Writing Center already espouse- at least in my experience.

One workshop, in particular, titillated my senses, which informed, and hopefully sensitized the tutor to different conventions of writing that many international (often ESL students) bring to their work. The rules of writing from their country of origin are not necessarily rules of poor writing, but different. For example, it is common for Korean International students, which the bulk of the writing is derived from quotes from an honored countryman. It would appear that the students wanted to ease their way through writing through plagiarism. Yet, a well-informed tutor would be able to handle this with appropriate tact, introducing and effectively teaching the American conventions of writing to the writer.

Our BCC students are juggling jobs, family, a new culture and language, or some are students fresh from high school where the school system failed to teach them the rudiments of writing.

Perhaps there is the aspiring writer that wants a second opinion to their written thoughts-whatever the dynamics might be, the tutors are here to serve them, to provide the best help we can.

Christopher Moseley: Well, being a new writing tutor and not being familiar with the center and its services, I was expecting a limited amount of people



Shazia and Betty discuss issues on the way to the conference.

at the conference. It was nice to see all the different tutors and professors coming together and discussing the many issues and techniques to improve the performance of our respective centers. I gained a lot of useful information from the workshops that I attended. Though I would like to keep this brief, I would like to share something that I feel was significant to me. Listening to the presenters, I learned that I can't always apply the same technique or strategy to every student. I recall one of the presenters saying that when we are guiding and educating students, we should imagine that information that we are providing is being transferred to the student down a stream of water. This way when we are presented with obstacles, we can mold and adapt to accomplish the main goal and that is to make sure the students learn. I found that in the past, I've been one of the tutors that have been flustered when my one technique or strategy did not allow the student to comprehend what I was trying to teach. With the workshops that I attended, I've learned many new verbal and visual exercises that may help students. I am very thankful that I was able to experience such a wonderful thing and share such special and unforgettable moments with all of you. I am definitely looking forward to doing this again.

Noman Jalal: It was one of those trips where in little time I gained enough knowledge to conquer any of the student complaints, for instance "I can't write" or "I am not a good writer" and a lot more. I learned so much in the conference that I haven't learned in past two years. I have learned many things from Jan, so much that I could have never learned anywhere. If it wasn't for Jan I wouldn't probably be who I am today as a tutor, but what I learned from the conference wasn't what Jan taught me, it was more like what I would have to learn on my own after applying the rules which I have learned. Basically, Jan taught me how to become a tutor and what I learned from the conference was the experience of being a tutor and evolving the strategies on how to be a better tutor. In the conference, many tutors shared their experiences, and so did I. There were some very important examples brought up by many tutors which affected their lives and the lives of their tutees.

There were many sessions to go to, but it was very disappointing that due to the limit of time we couldn't attend all of them. I wish we had more time to be able to attend all of those sessions. After all those sessions I went to, and seeing the dedication of everyone there who was representing his/her Writing Center and the ideas of those Writing Centers, I wanted to represent our Writing Center, too. Hopefully, if there is another chance and enough time available, I would love to represent our writing center and its ideas to others. Before going to the conference I was thinking that the people there would be really good tutors or as I thought they would be far better than I am. When I got there, I realized that they had same problems as we did, and they were facing same type of issues as we were facing in our Writing Center. In fact, our Writing Center has found the solution to many of those problems which they hadn't found yet. That is where I came in and told them what we do at our Writing Center and always gave an example of our awesome supervisor Janet Robertson and how she taught us to take care of those problems.

One of those problems which was brought to my attention was when tutees are not paying attention and they have their head down on the table or are leaning back on the chair- are doing something, which would show they are not really paying attention, are not interested or something. No one at the conference seemed to have a

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proper answer to that question, but I raised my hand and spoke out. First, I asked the question: why do we think that tutee is not paying attention when he/she is the one who walked in for help? Why isn't the tutee paying attention even though it's for the tutee's benefit, and the best part is that the tutee knows it! The answer is simple: Students feel relaxed when they are not doing the work and the tutor is doing all the work, which is why the first rule in our Writing Center is that a tutor never holds a pen unless it's for taking notes of the session. When you put the pen into the hands of a tutor, the tutor will be the one who will be writing and doing the work, not a tutee. Another problem might be when a tutor is doing most of the talking and a tutee is just listening. A student never really learns when all he/she is doing is listening, which at a point they are not listening, but they are just hearing. So a tutor must pose questions using the Socratic Method to get the tutee to be engaged in the session. I can assure that doing all this won't let the student kick back into their chair and just chill. That's how I was taught, and that is exactly what I did in my sessions. Believe me, it works.

Other peer tutors had some very interesting ideas too as well. The speakers gave us a question to think about which was, was learning happening during the session? This was the question I never thought about, and I would like for every tutor to think about in every session. Whenever we tutor, do we ever think that learning is happening or not? This will lead us to a place where we can give something to student and student will learn something from us. If we think about this question after every session, I am sure we would be able to become very good tutors at some point.

Another session I attended was very interesting for me: Three approaches to WC case studies: Linguistic, Psycho-therapeutic, and Organizational. I can talk for hours about that session, but I want to point out a story told by Ms. Courtenay Bouvier who has been teaching in the University of Iowa for past two years. She told us a story about a tutee that had an accident and had a bolt in her head, which she was treated for and wanted to become a nurse. Ms. Bouvier told her to write what and how she felt about the experience and was amazed by what she came up with. One day that girl went out with her friends and got drunk. She was picked up by someone and got raped. When she came back to Ms. Bouvier she listened to that girl's story and told her to express her feelings in writing. That girl wanted to get that person arrested who raped her. Ms. Bouvier said, "I saw the 5th one who went through that," which was the most shocking part for me. Her main point was as she said "lack of acknowledgment of humans". Tutors should acknowledge their tutees' feelings as well as their progress in writing.

We should always start with a compliment on a good job they did in the paper and narrow it down to the problems or mistakes they made. This reminds me of the time when another one of my senior awesome fellow tutors whose name is Miguel, helped me understand the CPE reading. That was the time when I was studying to take my CPE exam. The reason I am mentioning him is that whenever I was explaining the author's main point, he agreed with me even when I was wrong, but he would ask me another question to take me to a point where I will make that wrong to right and get the exact meaning of the author's point. The best thing he did was never say I was wrong and never made me feel uncomfortable. I am sure Miguel would never think it was that important, but for me it was. When tutors acknowledge the students' hard and good work, for the tutors it might not be important, but for the students it is very important. Who knows, that one little thing might give them enough courage, which will lead them to change their own life for better. We all should also do that and acknowledge the students' feelings and always encourage them to do their best in everything. Thank you Miguel and everyone else in the writing center for helping me to become a tutor as I am. Most importantly it was a great and memorable trip.

Betty Doyle: One of the most memorable ideas that I took away from the conference is one that we have been practicing here at our writing center but perhaps never formalized: the concept of getting lost as part of the process of inquiry and discovery. The idea is documented in Rebecca Solnit's book, *A Field Guide to Getting Lost*. The premise is that we should not be afraid to get lost in the process of writing but should be willing to "leave the door open for the unknown...where the most important things come from, where you yourself came from, and where you will go" (Solnit 4). After all, this is what writing is, a journey into the unknown.

As tutors, we journey with our tutees as they make their way across a terrain that is unfamiliar and



Miguel Gil and Daniel Tehrani visit a poster exhibit.

therefore frightening/overwhelming to the reluctant travellers, and exciting but lonesome to the accidental and/or seasoned tourist, for so are some of the students we treat. There is always a feeling of uncertainty, of lostness, of not being fully enfranchised. This is the nature of exploration and of writing.

We help to bring to light questions that are unanswered that need answering, and attend to those things that are lost and mysterious. Many students sit with contradictions as they turn towards questions and grapple with ideas that make them feel uncomfortable. Because of our training and insight, and because we have taken similar journeys, we help to move our students towards a place of consolation which in effect is "finding the thing, the nature of which is totally unknown to you" (Solnit 115). Having a tutor companion empowers the writer to venture further, deeper, into the frontier of shadowy ideas and unformed thoughts that tease and torment those who hold the pen, until he/she finds a place that satisfies the inner quest.

Daniel Tehrani: Many of the conference attendees were interested to hear about the BCC Writing Center and the students we serve. There was a session devoted entirely to Writing Centers at two-year colleges. We discussed meeting the needs of students who have not been in school for a long time, must balance family, work and school, or do not speak English as their first language. We agreed that the types of issues that come up in our sessions would baffle tutors at many four-year residential colleges.

Another session presented research by Alberta Gloria examining the factors that make or break the college careers of Latin@ students (Latin@ is Gloria's way of indicating gender neutrality). Gloria identifies these important factors for Latin@ students as: finding a community on campus where they feel at home, developing relationships with mentors and role models, connecting with people who are interested in them as individuals and in their culture, and experiencing mini-successes. The presenter proposed that writing centers serve these functions. As an example, she described the student who arrives on the verge of tears, marked-up paper in hand, and the tutor who is trained to acknowledge the person beneath all the red pen, find something that was done well, and compliment the student on it. That's a mini-success! I see it happen often at the BCC Writing Center. The presenter's comments highlighted the importance of our work and accentuated a shared experience that ties the BCC Writing Center to others across the world.

Kenisha Thomas: The Writing Center is often misunderstood—its role and utility questioned. Our location on the outskirts of campus in the basement of Philosophy Hall (seemingly marginalized) belies our status as a vital student resource. In reality, the Writing Center is a vibrant, pulsating hub of intellectual expression and creativity through writing. It is a social contact zone and a safe harbor where students from diverse cultural backgrounds meet and grapple with each other as well as

with their tutors as together they navigate the passages of their writing.

The November 4-6, 2010 joined the conference of the National Council on Peer Tutoring in Writing (NCPTW) and the International Writing Centers Association (IWCA) explored the idea of writing centers as safe harbors. It explored the concept of writing centers as places where students, with their many writing insecurities and vulnerabilities, are willing to go and open themselves and their most intimate thoughts to query.

Dozens of workshops were offered on topics and concerns particular to Writing Centers. I, along with our Writing Center Director Jan Robertson and over a dozen of our tutors, had the opportunity to attend several of them. We came away from the workshops and the conference unanimously agreeing on the soundness of the approach that we have been taught and trained in by our director, as time and again our approach was reflected in the material presented by the various colleges and universities in their workshops.

We view the students we work with on a daily basis as whole persons and not just as students. They have many roles that they play, and when they come to a tutoring session, they bring all of their many selves with them. Our tutors take this into account and deal with each student accordingly. We work with students at their level and appreciate the differences in abilities and skills that they each bring to a session. Our goal at all times is to empower and edify them and help them explore their capabilities as writers.

To reiterate, the conference validated and reinforced the work that we are already doing at our Writing Center. It also showcased our connectedness and international nature. We are not marginalized. We are key. We are central. We are the Writing Center.

P.S. Enormous thanks to our director whose dogged persistence and diplomatic pursuit of funding from a variety of sources on and off campus made this conference possible.

Major thank you's also to our tutors whose interest and financial contributions ensured the success of our trip.

Christopher Minaya: As several sizable yet elegant chandeliers illuminate the spacious ballroom in Baltimore's Sheraton Inner Harbor Hotel, hundreds of Writing Center tutors from across the nation, including 17 from our writing center, are seated separately but are united by one notion. The notion is to come together during the IWCA-NCPTW 2010 Conference to learn how to improve peer tutoring in writing from one another and implement the learning at our respective Writing Center.

As keynote speaker Andrea A. Lunsford delivers her speech, the collection of tutors appears to be a youthful United Nations, for it is a notably diverse congregation, all listening with an attentive, professional demeanor. Being given such a remarkable opportunity to be amongst such a fine group, one expression surely entered each of the minds of those from our writing center, thank you.

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